

CRIBB<S>NOTE

In the midst of tragedy, disasters, and horrible events, we ask, “Where is God?” Sometimes we ask, “How could God allow this to happen?” Terrible things occur around us: a student is raped on a college campus; people are blown up in office buildings; church-goers are shot and killed outside the sanctuary; ice storms leave motorists stranded and dozens dead; and the list of dreaded headline news goes on. And someone asks, “Where is God?” “Why did this happen?”

We are particularly vulnerable during these days of festive, holiday moods. We swing between exuberance and depression. We experience a heightened sensitivity to everything and everybody around us. One moment we are happy and cheerful. We shift into another mode and our emotions slip into a state of worry and sadness. We face so much stimulation and manipulation urging us to rush into the shopping spree and bear the rudeness of over-crowded department stores and congested aisles. We navigate our way through row after row of items on display tempting and luring us to pick them up, try them on, and buy, buy, buy. Or, we go on the Internet and let our credit cards take the hit. Is God at the mall or online?

The double deadly shootings in Colorado Springs this week sent shock waves across America. Last week, a teenage gunman opened fire in an Omaha shopping mall. This week another young man took aim at youth in a church mission group and twelve hours later he went to a mega-church with a cache of weapons and ammunition for the reported purpose of killing Christians. There he encountered an armed security guard who shot and killed him as he approached the sanctuary after he had murdered two teenaged sisters in the church parking lot.

The story is bizarre beyond belief. More than the horror of a lone gunman intent on massacring people at worship, there were a dozen or so security guards on duty inside the church; half of them armed. Colorado Springs is possibly the capital of religious conservatism in America; and the gunman came from a very religious, very conservative family. “Was God there?”

Too often it is not until things come very close to home for us do we begin to feel the depths of wretched life moments. That is when we take notice and wonder “how could this have happened (to us)?”

Yet, God comes and saves us when we may least expect it. 400 years of slavery and later exile for the People of the Book occasioned a Still Speaking God to enter their history and re-design new life and provide hope. How does God come into our lives and into the world?

God is always with us. The reality is that we are not always conscious of God’s presence. Real human beings live among us who have been touched by God to help us survive overwhelming odds and difficult encounters. Yet, we do not always listen or follow their wisdom and instruction.

God is always with us, but very often we are too busy being and doing what seems right to us when we should reverse our lives. Instead of seeking God’s acceptance of us, it is much better to align ourselves with God’s desire, intention, and purpose for us. We must seek to be in right order with God rather than hope for God’s affirmation of us. God is with us always, but if we do not honor divine guidance we end up living a godless life. That puts us in the corridor of disaster and we wonder “Where is God?” Now is a very good time to answer that question. We will quickly discover again God is near. God is here. God is still speaking.